



Illinois E-Health News

Illinois Office of Health Information Technology
Information for Patients and Consumers

Issue # 1

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Electronic Health Records: What You Need to Know

Health information technology, sometimes called e-health, uses computer networks to manage your medical records. Every state including Illinois is moving forward with this technology to benefit your health and lower the cost of health care.

If you've gone to more than one doctor or seen a specialist, visited a clinic or a hospital, you may have separate paper medical records stored in each one of these locations. Those records include information about illnesses, injuries, medications and results of medical tests you've taken. Because your records are stored in paper files in different locations, it's very difficult for your doctors or other health care providers to review your complete health information. Electronic records will allow you and your doctor to make better decisions based on complete information. When will your provider be using e-health? Ask them!

How Electronic Health Records Help YOU as a Patient

- ✓ You get better and safer care when your care providers have a complete picture of your medical information.
- ✓ Health information that could save your life is available in emergencies.
- ✓ You won't need to fill out forms every time you visit a health care provider or visit a hospital.
- ✓ Your personal information is stored in a safe and secure system.
- ✓ You can skip unnecessary duplicate tests, which are wasteful and can be risky.

Are Electronic Health Records Private and Secure?

Only authorized health care providers such as your doctor can create, view, update or share your records with your other health care providers. Electronic health records must be shared through a secure network, and doctors' offices, hospitals, emergency rooms or clinics that have access must follow strict security procedures.

For more information visit www.hie.illinois.gov/

"E-health - Better Care Through Technology"



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Electronic Prescribing: What You Need to Know

Electronic prescribing, or e-prescribing, is when your doctor sends your prescription electronically directly to your pharmacy in a secure way. The pharmacy receives the prescription and can fill it right away. When will your doctor e- prescribe? Ask!

How Electronic Prescribing Helps YOU As a Patient

- ✓ Keeps you safer. The e-prescribing program can immediately warn your doctor about possible allergies or drug interactions. (Your doctor can also see a list of all your currently prescribed medications.)
- ✓ Possible savings on your prescriptions. When your doctor e-prescribes, they can see if there are less expensive medications available and see if the medications are covered by your insurance.
- ✓ It's quick and convenient. You'll no longer need to drop prescriptions off at the pharmacy and wait while it is filled. (A prescription is sent electronically directly to the pharmacy.)
- ✓ Reduces potential errors made with hard to read handwritten prescriptions. An e-prescription is more clearly read than a handwritten prescription.

Technology and Your Health Care

Technologies such as the Internet have already changed health care for patients, their families, and the people of Illinois. Health information technology makes it possible for you and your health care providers to better manage and coordinate your care through secure and confidential use of electronic records instead of paper records stored in various locations. This is already happening across Illinois from large cities to rural areas, including where our most vulnerable and underserved populations live.

The goals of health information technology are to: **1.** Improve the quality of health care. **2.** Provide better outcomes. **3.** Increase safety. **4.** Control health care costs. **5.** Improve public health by tracking the spread of diseases. **6.** Improve health care in underserved communities.

For more information or to sign up for e-health updates, visit www.hie.illinois.gov/

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